

CH. XI

SUPPRESSION OF NOMADISM

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honest labor. Just between the three of us, though, the poor peasants of the village get together in a meeting and decide: "So-and-so has six horses; we couldn't very well get along without those in the collective farm; besides he hired a man last year to help on the harvest." They notify the GPU and there you are. So-and-so gets five years. They confiscate his property and give it to the new collective farm. Sometimes they ship the whole family out. When they came to ship us out, my brother got a rifle and fired several shots at the GPU officers. They fired back. My brother was killed. All of which, naturally, didn't make it any better for us. We all got five years, and in different places. I heard my father died in December, but I'm not sure.

All this¹ happened more than twenty years ago. Since then Communist ranks have swollen and absorbed hundreds of the people of the soil, official statistics show the usual propaganda figure of 98 or 99 per cent of the peasants in the *Kolkhoz*, and the Kazaks and Uzbeks have begun to qualify as mechanics. The new economy is settling down and the Soviets would have the world believe that, in spite of backslidings, the peasants are docile and apt to the mechanical age which has overtaken them. The cotton expansion policy has ridden on shortage and misery to triumph; industry and mineral wealth have been developed (the former largely by the establishment of textile mills for cotton and silk in Turki²stan itself) and the connection with Siberia by the Turk-Sib Railway, opened in 1930, is a permanent symbol of a new economic era. Perhaps most significant of all, the Soviets have insisted on the emancipation of women, making the discarding of the veil the touchstone of loyalty to the new idea. In this, let it be remarked, they run counter only to the orthodox tradition of Bukhara and the south, and not to that of the nomad, whose women, riding freely on the steppe, were never veiled. On a short or a long view the removal of the *paranja* must be regarded as a beneficent reform, against which no Central Asian nationalist would find it easy to exclaim. Lastly, in the oases at least, there are signs of plenty, and even of the emergence of a new Party aristocracy. The fatted calf can still be killed, and favoured visitors lick their lips as they

¹[collectivization; see cat. 116, pp. 175-179 -- Analyst]

- 433 are introduced to banquets spread out in garden pavilions, where *Kolkhoz* officials uneasily may take their ease.¹

000 The cultivated lands of the southern oases are in a favoured part of the earth's surface. They are indeed restricted, but acre for acre, they are probably among the most productive in Asia. Throughout history the population was thick on the land and, once subdued, could be subjected to police control village by village without being able to put up much of a resistance. State management of the essential water-supply gave to authority the final weapon that could scarcely be gainsaid. Even the second Revolution could not destroy the natural prosperity of such favoured lands as these. But on the steppe and in the mountains it was different.

THE NOMADS

- 233 In order to understand the situation facing the Soviet planners of the collective farm in the wide unirrigated territory north of the Sir Darya, and in the more remote mountain glens, it is necessary to have some insight into the meaning of Central Asian nomadism. There are two forms of nomadism: that of the spreading open steppe, and that of the nomads who move with the season to the mountains. The first form, that of the steppe, is not unlike the nomadism of the Beduin in the Arabian deserts, for much of the steppe melts into a desert colder and less hospitable than Arabia. It has indeed a considerable snow precipitation, and therefore usually affords excellent pasture when the snows melt in the spring. But

[474] ¹ Cf. Coates, *op. cit.* pp. 232-4. This contains an amusing account of a princely entertainment offered in 1947 in the garden surrounding his private house near Tashkent by the Uzbek chairman of a *Kolkhoz*. The meal was spread in a pavilion — one among many — looking down a garden avenue, flanked with vines laden with grapes. The first course consisted of pies, sausages, bread and cakes, fried pelmeta, fruit, almonds, sweets, wine and cognac, with soup, tea and yoghurt as aids to digestion. There followed the *piéti de résistance*, a pilav, an hour's gorged rest and to finish up a rich dessert of melons, grapes and other fruit. 'What', asked the visitors, 'has become of the former owners of the land?' 'Some', replied the chairman, 'were killed during the fighting, others had fled the USSR, but some of the younger people have settled down to honest labour. The son of my former master, for instance, is now a member of this *Kolkhoz*.'

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CH. XII INDUSTRIALIZATION AND PUBLIC WORKS 191

Scott, who shared these labours and saw the heroism and misery of the workers, speaks with understanding of the passionate idealism that sustained the Russians who made the sacrifice. He and they thought of it all as a war, in which the soldiers must be prepared to die. It was, he felt, a society for which it was worth while to shed blood and tears. The expropriated peasants, the political exiles, were a lost tribe, sacrificed on the altar of progress. They would die off, but by their death Socialism would win through to a time when it could function without scrapping blocks of its population every decade. A cruel concept, but there it was. ○○○

There was most certainly a great Russian idealism, even a grandeur in this plan and its achievement. But, like the valour of Sparta, it was a heroism that depended for survival on the labour of countless slaves and helots, pitilessly ground down and made to work at menial tasks without thought of human dignity. The helots of Turkish stock had not been born into the ranks of citizens, but they were set in the forefront of the battle to fight a cause that was not theirs. Most of them were inarticulate at the time, but later events were to demonstrate clearly enough that the iron had entered into their souls. Unlike the Russians, these did not believe the papers which told them daily they were the luckiest people in the world. The vast metallurgical combine of the Urals, the centre of the heavy industry of Soviet Asia, was set up just beyond and on the fringe of the most northerly of the five Central Asian republics. Their part in it was only to sweat and groan and die in mine or mill, to be frozen stiff on a scaffold at construction work or burned at a furnace mouth. In their own homeland they did not fare much better.

Beyond the Urals and within the political boundaries of the five republics the industrial lay-out was not quite so intensive and was certainly more varied. There are indeed non-ferrous metals in Turkistan of great importance. North of Balkhash at Kunrad, and in the Jezkazgan area of the northern steppe, 433● 328

- 433 are situated the largest copper-workings and smelting plants
328 in the Union, and there is another at Almalik close to Tashkent
and therefore better placed for transport than the larger mines
farther north. At Chimkent is the largest lead centre in the
Union, working ore from many quarters, including the Tajik
hills. And there are important minerals, said to include
mercury, radium and uranium, in the mountains surrounding
433 the Farghana Valley. But, apart from the man-power they
can supply to feed the industrial Moloch, the main importance
of the five republics in this field is to be found in the produc-
tion of the raw material for textiles — cotton and silk — and
the availability of supplementary sources of power, which
include oil, coal and water-generated electricity. The produc-
tion of the last, hydro-electric power, is tied up in the minds
of Soviet engineers with large-scale irrigation, and this in turn
with transport, both by waterway and railway. In all these
sj heres there has been ambitious planning, and forecasts are
often extravagant and even grandiose. In almost all cases it is
hard to disentangle prospective targets from actual results,
publicity media being regularly used to give an impression
that projects which have not in fact left the draughtsman's
table are on the point of realization in the field. Indeed it can
fairly be said that almost any account of planned development
in Soviet Russia, industrial or agricultural, calls for question
on this ground. Usually the more poetic the vision of the
publicist, the less advanced will be found to be the execution
of the work. Another tendency is to claim as the triumph of
the Soviet genius works which were in fact conceived and
carried to an advanced stage by Tsarist engineers. This is
particularly apparent in the field of railway works.

185 It is convenient to view industrial development in this
region under four main heads :

- (a) power, including oil, coal and hydro-electric ;
- (b) light industry, mainly cotton and silk textiles ;
- (c) irrigation ;
- (d) transport, railway and waterway.

1950 TARGETS¹

	Population 1939		Heavy Industry (Millions of Tons)			Textiles (Millions of Metres)			Crops (Millions of Hectares *)	
	Total	'Native'	Coal	Oil	Steel	Cotton	Silk	Woollen	Cash	Grain
Kazakhstan	6,146,000	3'09	16'4 (Karaganda)	1'2 † (Emba)	0'07	19'0	Nil	3'9	0'34	5'34
Kirghizia	1,459,000	0'88	1'6	0'08	Nil	0'7	0'92	0'5	0'11	0'7
Tajikistan	1,485,000	1'22	0'44	0'06	Nil	18'0	5'1	Nil	0'18	0'63
Turkmenia	1,254,000	0'83	0'06	1'1 (Nebit Dagh)	Nil	22'0	0'83	0'82	0'16	0'16
Uzbekistan	6,282,000	4'98	1'1 (Angren)	1'1	0'1	161'0	14'0 (Samarkand and Margilan)	Nil	1'13	1'38
Total	16,626,000	11'00	19'6 = 7'8% of USSR total of 250 m. tons	3'54 = 9'9% of USSR total of 35'4 m. tons	0'17 USSR total given as 25 m. tons	220'7 = 4'7% of USSR total of 4'686 m. metres	20'85 USSR total not ascertained	4'22 USSR total not ascertained	1'92 of which 1'35 m. is under cot- ton = 80'4% of USSR total	8'21 = 7'7% of USSR total of 105'8 m. hectares

* 1 hectare = 2'5 acres approx.

† Does not include Ural oilfields at Ishimbay, producing in 1950 at the rate of, say, 7 million tons a year.

2 [i.e. of Fourth Five Year Plan -- Analyst]

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[A.213]

8:Kostenko 144-G-4,5 (1868-80)1880 RL1 Turkestan
[Vernyy] RL1

361 Type of Factory Quantity of Production Number of
438 Production in rubles workers

[433] Distillery	1	146,000 gal.	171,000	145
Brewery	1	5,700 gal.	1,540	5
Leather	3	23,659 pieces	82,774	57
Brick	11	520,000 pieces	7,800	52
Vodka	1	5,500 gal.	7,524	6
Total	17	-	270,638	265

361 The commerce of Vernyy is developing
441 quite perceptibly, due to the favorable po-
438 sition of the town at the junction of roads
from Kuldja to Tashkent and to Kokand, and
from Kashgar to Semipalatinsk. Formerly the
caravans passed through Vernyy without stopping.
In recent times they have begun to be unloaded
for roadside sale. In addition, many merchants
from Tashkent and neighboring dominions have
come here purposely for continuous trade.

In the environs of Vernyy every year
there is a considerable purchase of animals
from the Kazakhs, not only for Tashkent and
Kuldja, but also for Petropavlovsk, which is
over 1200 versts away.

[366] At the present time there are two ba-
zaars in Vernyy: a large and a small one.
The total number of stalls in 1871 came to
390, whereas in 1863 there were only 50, and
in 1859 about 20.

361 The trade in Vernyy is developing in
438 proportion to the strengthening of tranquility

[Kuldja]

RL1

361

1) Russians Males Females Total

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Hereditary nobility	6	4	10
Non-hereditary nobility	12		12
Monastic clergy	1		1
Lower middle class	19	7	26
Peasants	9	4	13
Military	714		714
Cossacks	257		257

2) Natives

Taranchi	2,083	1,882	3,905
Dungans	202	206	406
Chinese	976	776	1,752
Other nationalities (1)	370	225	595

Total	4,649	3,044	7,693
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1. Here belong Kalmycks, Torgouts, Manchus, Kazakhs, Afghans and Sarts, immigrants from Turkēstan and Kashgar.

/435/ The division of the population of Kuldja according to religious belief is as follows:

	Male	Female	Total
Eastern Orthodox	1,013	14	1,027
Catholics	72	71	143
Lutherans	3	-	3
Moslems	2,655	2,253	4,908
Pagans	906	706	1,612

4,649	3,044	7,693
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The productivity of Kuldja is not great.

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The recent troubles and unrest which have torn

[Kuldja]

RL1

361 the Ili province have slowed down the useful
 433 activity by the population considerably, and
 they are now beginning to breathe easily and
 recover.

361 The number of booths in the town is con-
 siderable: there are 650. The amount of wares,
 438 however, is insignificant, and is limited to
 439 the absolute needs of the population. The more
 important trade is carried on by Sarts from
 Tashkent, Kokand and Kashgar, and Tatars from
 Vernyy and Kopal. The chief articles of import
 are mats and khalats (long cloaks) from Kashgar
 and other Moslem towns, inferior types of cotton
 prints, nankeen, calico, plush, broadcloth and
 metal objects from Vernyy and Kopal, and tea
 from Urumchi and China proper. In exchange for
 these products they export sheep (mostly from
 Kashgar), dressed lamb skins, raw hides, pot-
 tery wares, apples and apricots, fox pelts,
 young staghorns. These last are sold very
 profitably through Kyakhta by the Chinese and
 are used by them as a medicine against impotency.

361 The factory and craft industries are even
 433 more insignificant than the trade. Here is a
 list of the largest industries:

Types of factories and workshops	number	sum of pro- duction in rubles	number of workers
Oil manufacturing	10	12,000	78
Paper mill	4	500	24
Cast iron foundries	5	600	20
/436/ Pottery	2	960	6
Dye works	1	300	5
Vermicelli makers	3	101	6
Total	25	14,461	139